

MEDIA RELEASE

North East LHIN helps Moms and Newborns Access Care *More than 5,000 babies born in Northeastern Ontario last year*

June 1, 2012 -- Things are looking up for new arrivals in Northeastern Ontario's maternity wards – like Addison Françoise McIsaac – thanks to work by the North East LHIN to help standardize levels of maternal and newborn care.

Addison was born six months ago at North Bay Regional Health Centre. Neither she nor her parents were aware of the work going on behind the scenes to ensure consistency of birthing services.

The NE LHIN worked over the past year with the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health to develop and implement standardized levels of care definitions for maternal and neonatal units. A summary of levels of maternal and newborn care provided by Northeastern hospitals is now completed.

“Access to information is key. These new standards, combined with the CritiCall referral system for physicians, will provide the right information for hospitals when making the decision to transfer women and their infants to the most appropriate and closest care facility -- should an emergency situation arise,” says Louise Paquette, CEO of the North East LHIN.

As the North East LHIN's Emergency Department Lead, and Medical Director of the CritiCall Program for Northeastern and Northwestern (Northern) Ontario, Dr. Andrew Caruso sees how this data will benefit patients.

“Until recently, there were variations in admission criteria and services offered which presented challenges for hospitals, care providers and other health care partners who need to know the exact type of care available at each hospital in order to help patients, particularly in emergency situations,” says Dr. Caruso. “This work will improve maternal and newborn care for moms and babies in Northeastern Ontario.”

FACTS:

- 12 hospitals/health centres in the North East LHIN region provide maternal and newborn services – Notre-Dame Hospital, Hearst; Health Sciences North, Sudbury; Lady Minto Hospital, Cochrane; Manitoulin Health Centre, Little Current Site; North Bay Regional Health Centre; Sault Area Hospital; Sensenbrenner Hospital, Kapuskasing; St. Joseph General Hospital, Elliot Lake; Temiskaming Hospital; Timmins & District Hospital; Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, Moose Factory; West Parry Sound Health Centre.
- In 2011, there were 5,139 babies born in Northeastern Ontario.
- Funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, CritiCall is a 24-hour-a-day emergency referral service for physicians. As of May 14, CritiCall has begun using the maternal and newborn data about levels of care to direct transfers based on care requirements of the mother and/or newborn.

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PHOTO CUTLINE:

Things are looking up for Northern babies! Six-month-old Addison was born at North Bay Regional Health Centre, one of the hospitals in the North East LHIN region to recently participate in the development and implementation of standardized levels of care definitions for maternal and neonatal units. Baby Addison was one of more than 5,000 babies born last year in Northeastern Ontario.